



CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

A Christian Journal Of Opinion

On Calling Ourselves "Christian" – A Change in Our Name

Observant readers will note that after sixteen years there has been a slight change in the phrase by which we describe this journal. Until this week it had been called "A Journal of Christian Opinion." From now on it will be called "A Christian Journal of Opinion." This change is not merely stylistic or pedantic. It is intended to correct two kinds of misunderstanding which are expressed from time to time by our critics. Sometimes we are scored for the lack of any specifically Christian content in many of our articles or editorials. At other times we are accused of an act of presumption in identifying our opinion as *the* "Christian Opinion" on a given current problem. We hope that the shift in the location of the adjective will clarify our intention.

The new title, "A Christian Journal of Opinion," is intended to say concisely that we are a journal of opinion edited by a group of Christians, that we have no wish to convey the impression that we are *the* Christian journal or that our opinions are *the* Christian opinions, but that we, nevertheless, have no disposition to relinquish our right to the term "Christian." The occasion of this slight change in our name affords an opportunity to re-think what we really mean by applying the adjective "Christian" to ourselves, and how that is related to the opinions expressed in these pages. There are some things which this means and some things which it does not mean.

Calling ourselves "Christian" means not only that the editors stand within Christian faith, but that we are intending to express our Christian concern. This journal is edited on the assumption that our faith is inherently and irrevocably relevant to all the problems of our personal and social life. If Christians are persons who are moved by God's

love as known in Christ, who are always concerned about the people who are exploited or neglected, who are guided and corrected by the kind of awareness that comes from Christian insights concerning themselves and human society, who are stimulated and sustained by membership in the Christian community—then Christians *must* try to find answers to questions they face as citizens.

But calling ourselves Christian does not mean that we can always, or even frequently, affirm some one Christian answer to these questions. In the light of their faith, Christians must try to find the best policies for political and economic life. But there is no "Christian politics," and there is no "Christian economics"—despite the use of the latter phrase as the name of a publication with which we rarely agree. This is in part because matters of social policy, while they involve Christian judgments, also involve technical judgments, and judgments based upon hazardous predictions concerning the actual effects of a given policy upon society. And situations do arise—as has been recently illustrated in connection with the Middle East—in which two or more acknowledged Christian objectives seem to call for conflicting emphases in matters of immediate policy. We cannot evade the necessity of looking for the best solutions to social questions, but, as readers of this journal well know, these solutions are often highly precarious at best, and frequently depend on judgments concerning which Christians may quite legitimately differ.

Calling ourselves Christian means that it is within the context and under the imperative of Christian social concern that we seek to understand the various sorts of baffling concrete issues that are discussed in each issue of this journal. But calling ourselves Christian does *not* mean that

every time we deal with an immediate issue in the realm of political or economic policy we will do so in terms of explicit Christian ideas or beliefs or symbols. Often we are forced to do our own thinking about the issue at hand, because there may be few, if any, distinctively Christian landmarks to guide us in our analysis of the situation or our recommendation of a policy. But such groping discussion can be the discharging of a Christian responsibility and has a proper place in a Christian journal.

Calling ourselves Christian does, however, mean more than just having a sense of articulated concern. We believe that we can point to Christian illumination on our human life which is independent of our own wisdom and which we can hope is not always hidden by the mists of our own error. We write against the background of recent ecumenical thinking, which is itself a witness to this illumination. There has developed a real consensus in the churches in relation to objectives. In our effort to see what Christian faith and Christian love mean for our decisions, there is much to guide us in this corporate thinking-out of the implications for human society of God's revelation of himself in Jesus Christ.

But calling ourselves Christian does not mean that we ever claim divine sanction for what must always remain our opinion. We recognize the danger of pretentiousness in applying the adjective "Christian" to any human enterprise. We can guard against the danger if we remember that Christians are themselves forgiven sinners and that every Christian organization also partakes of this sin and is Christian only by grace. It is precisely as *Christians* that we must constantly acknowledge that our judgments are distorted by the error and the one-sidedness which are the inevitable products of our sin and finitude. But it is also as *Christians* that we feel impelled to express those judgments, offering them for whatever use they may be to our fellow Christians, and trusting that God, who purges and cleanses, can transform, and use for the fulfillment of his own purposes, even the imperfect offerings of men. THE EDITORS

THE DECLINE OF BRITAIN AND FRANCE

SENATOR J. William Fulbright's resolution to examine the whole series of policies and events which led to the catastrophic shattering of the Anglo-American alliance and of our concord

with the whole European community over Middle East policy has fortunately been made bipartisan in character by Senator William Knowland's proposal to extend the Senate inquiry from 1946 to 1956. In that form it will undoubtedly be granted by the Senate and we will be enlightened on many obscurities about policies which led to the break with Britain and France and to the attack upon Egypt without our knowledge or consent.

However, even now there are some clear indications of the tensions which caused the break. It is obvious, for instance, that we did not take seriously enough the dependence of Europe upon Middle Eastern oil and that we miscalculated, and still miscalculate, the dynamism of Nasser's regime. The British felt that no sufficient guarantees had been given about freedom of traffic in the canal and that the rising of Russian power in the Middle East was not regarded with sufficient alarm. The Eisenhower Doctrine is, in essence, a belated admission of the validity of the British impatience with our indifference. For, if affairs are as desperate as Dulles now claims them to be, they could not possibly have been as promising as we were led to believe during the campaign.

But these are details in a much larger picture. It may actually not be too creative to elaborate the details through an inquiry because it is more important to come to terms with the larger issue. That larger issue is the frightening loss of prestige and power by both Britain and France and the equally frightening accretion of power by the USA. The simple fact is that in a nuclear age, the only two nations which have an indubitable freedom of action are Russia and America.

During the Suez crisis both Britain and France wanted to take more rigorous action than we thought wise, either because of the exigencies of the presidential campaign or because, as the Europeans are inclined to think, we are given by inclination to large and vague solutions for problems which require detailed strategy and tactics. But the European impatience with us could not have prompted this desperate and abortive gamble if there had not been deeper causes for their sense of frustration. Those deeper causes may well have been the slowly dawning sense of impotence. They were no longer masters in their own houses. They had to ask "Papa," and "Papa" is particularly infuriating when he is a gentleman given to alternating fits of frenetic energy and amiable benevolence.

However trying we may be as an hegemonous

power, however inexperienced in carrying the vast responsibilities which we have shouldered for only a short decade, and however unwise we may have been of late, the sense of frustration in Britain and France would still have expressed itself. In the case of Britain, there was the slow but gnawing awareness that the nation which had held the fort for the whole of mankind and experienced its "finest hour" only two decades ago was now unable to live and work without the help of its powerful ally and was unable to determine its own policy or measure its own perils. Some of the resentments of this frustration surely must have accounted for the wide support in the British public for Eden's adventure despite the fact that all the proper people were shocked by this "crude" resort to force. The abortive adventure not only involved Eden in a personal tragedy, but involved the whole nation in a tragic denouement. For the brave assertion of freedom served only to sink the nation into new levels of impotence.

This marked shift in power and prestige from Britain to ourselves in the alliance of freedom was not, of course, as sudden as the events of the past months. It was recognized by Churchill throughout the war and after, and his magnanimity and his close relation with Roosevelt did much to ease the shift. It may also be worth observing that the personal prestige of this magnanimous old war horse and statesman did much to hide the actual shift of power from both the victims and the beneficiaries of the shift. In international as in domestic politics, prestige is power; but it can not permanently withstand the pressure of great battalions, which is in this case the economic power to furnish the battalions with nuclear weapons.

Yet America would be well advised to make use of the prestige of Britain even when its impotence is apparent. For it is obvious that her prestige is greater than our own precisely on those continents where she once held imperial dominion and liquidated an empire and where we tried so vainly to exploit our "anti-colonialism." The attitude of India toward Britain and toward us is instructive on this point. Anthony Nutting, the former Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, is certainly right in insisting that nothing is as important as the most intimate Anglo-American cooperation in Asia and Africa, for only by this cooperation can the free world benefit from both British prestige and American power. Every vain-glorious assertion of our newly won power will be a detriment to the free world. That is why the UN resolution which ordered Britain and France out of Egypt "forthwith" was so catas-

trophic. It destroyed the prestige of our allies and thereby diminished the common fund of prestige of the free world.

The case of France is somewhat different though the frustrations of impotence were similar. France is slowly adjusting herself to the fact of her impotence and is frequently given to pretentious displays of her imperial glory. While Britain has liquidated an empire and built a commonwealth of nations, France has been an embarrassment to the Western world by abortive efforts to suppress the national aspirations of her subject peoples. Her one clear virtue over Britain is the absence of racial arrogance in her imperial proconsuls and bureaucrats. This racial arrogance has done much to taint the virtue of the British political achievements. France has done fairly well in tutoring both Tunisia and Morocco for self-government, but she is bogged down in Algeria. Why? The simplest answer is that the empire in Algeria is a curious mixture of the imperial ambitions of the ancient regime and the illusions of the Enlightenment. Those illusions persuaded the French that they could wipe out the distinctions between African Moslems and French Europeans and regard Algeria as a part of metropolitan France. But the illusions of the Enlightenment did not prevent the system of weighted votes, which gave every French vote the value of six Algerian votes. The resulting resentments can be imagined. But meanwhile, under the power of the fiction of the "rights of man," millions of Frenchmen settled in Algeria, and their stubborn resistance to imperial reform, prompted no doubt by a strong survival impulse, complicates the whole Algerian problem.

France is clearly not as necessary for the integration of the non-Communist world as Britain, though we ought to have some understanding of her desperation, which prompted cooperation with Britain in Egypt. She was clearly more intent upon bringing down Nasser, the ostensible instigator of all her Algerian difficulties, than in freeing the canal. But the defects of French policy and the embarrassment of French sensibilities must be regarded as one of the hazards of our hegemonous position, which we can not simply destroy by announcing our essential agreement with the nations of the Bandung conference.

One of the complexities of our problem is that there is a so-called "free world" which does not want to fall victim to communism; the heart of this world is European civilization, tainted with 19th century imperialism, but still technically and spiritually the one necessary bulwark against totalitarianism.

R.N.

The Church's New Concern with the Arts

AMOS N. WILDER

EVIDENCE OF a new interest in the arts on the part of the churches appears on all sides today. At the level of the local church we note exhibits of religious painting and sculpture, productions of modern plays like those of Eliot and Christopher Fry, as well as initiatives with respect to the dance and the pageant. The Riverside Church in New York City has now for two years sponsored an annual anthology of poetry by college writers, judges of which have included Marianne Moore, Richard Eberhart and Mark Van Doren. Church bodies, local or regional, have also organized series of lectures or institutes bearing on the modern arts. A recent Seminar in Religion, Drama and Literature at Drew University with the help of the Danforth Foundation, and under the auspices of the Commission on Literature of the National Council of Churches, attracted a good number of teachers of English. The lecturers included both theologians and distinguished artists. A significant venture last year was that of the New Hampshire Congregational-Christian Conference in association with Dartmouth College in providing a monthly series of lectures for pastors on such writers as Eliot, Kafka, Faulkner, Camus, etc. In many ways the churches are making amends for their shortcomings in this field.

It is certainly possible to be over-optimistic about such signs of interest in the arts on the part of Christians. It may well be that most of this interest is confined to relatively small groups. Matters like taste are hard to change. The re-education of the emotions is no doubt more difficult than that of the reason, if the two can be separated. The re-education of the imagination is still more difficult. Here, indeed, what is required is no less than a conversion. In his discussion of Catholic art in France, in *L'Art Sacré*, Père Régamey well documents the resistances to the significant new initiatives in ecclesiastical architecture and art, not only among the masses of believers but among Catholic intellectuals. He confesses quite desperately that the situation is all but hopeless, though the witness must still be borne. He cites encouraging examples of the reconciliation of those who were first scandalized, once they had actually become familiar with such new departures as the church at Assy or the chapel at Vence—familiar, that is, not by observation but by worship itself in these buildings.

Mr. Wilder, a member of the Editorial Board of this journal, is Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard Divinity School.

Our hope for significant changes of attitude in this whole area must rest finally not so much on aesthetic instruction and "propaganda" in the good sense, but on the combination of this with profound cultural impulses today which affect the attitudes of men to faith and its forms. Revolutionary changes in life as a whole empty older symbols of their meaning and men are ready then to respond to new symbols or new forms of old symbols that speak to the new situation.

Living by Symbols

More significant today than the church's activity in connection with the ecclesiastical arts is the deeper motivation which is revolutionizing the church's whole attitude to symbolic expression. Even those churches which we call liturgical, and which have maintained a positive attitude toward the arts, have recognized a new dimension in this area. The historical study of Christian art has quickened, and been quickened by, the new recognition of the importance of the symbolic element in religion and life. The historian of religion, generally, has learned to assign more significance to myth, ritual and art in the understanding of the world's faith. Psychology and anthropology have contributed their insights to the matter.

Thus the perceptive theologian today sees the arts not merely as servants of the church in the sense of embellishments of worship or strategies for religious propaganda. Nor is he satisfied to set the arts, as an inspirational resource, over against daily life, and to say that religion must use the sources of the Spirit—meaning Beauty, Poetry and Imagination—over against the prosaic and utilitarian world in which modern men live. Here we have the idealistic fallacy. Such a dichotomy of prose and poetry, of actuality and dreams, or of realism and imagination, is really an escape philosophy. It disparages art and worship as mere consolations, and surrenders over the actual life of men as, in effect, unredeemable. It capitulates to the banishment of the arts and worship from a materialistic world, from a rational-technological age.

The critics and lovers of art who everlastingly appeal to Beauty and to the Spirit are always the first ones to reject a T. S. Eliot or a Faulkner, a Picasso or a Stravinsky; only much later, under the force of overwhelming evidence, to give them a grudging approval.

The theologian today recognizes that even the

materialist lives not by creature comforts, prosperity and success, but by his own symbols and images, his own myths and rituals. He recognizes that the conflict today is not between matter and spirit, but between two kinds of spirit; not between prose and imagination, but between a true and false imagination; not even, finally, between ugliness and Beauty, because what some would call beauty and ideality cannot save.

What finally is important is the symbol and the kind of symbol, the imagery and the kind of imagery, the myth and the kind of myth. For symbols convey truth or error. They mediate illusion or reality. Sentimental symbols or aspiration, dreams and ideality may effect temporary reflexes or beauty or induce charmed states of euphoria, but this is escapism. This is religious romanticism and not true religion, much less Christianity. At one time, it is true, Christian transcendentalism, like Christian Platonism, incorporated a substantial core of the Christian view of man and evil, so as to constitute a valid version of Christian theology. But these strains of Christian idealism have been attenuated and washed out in a great flood of religious and secular sentimentalism.

Recovery of Concreteness

The best theology today, in its repudiation of a rhetorical religious idealism, finds itself in agreement with a recurrent note in contemporary poetry. Hebraic concreteness is more at home with modern verse than is Greek Platonism. T. S. Eliot said of Henry James that he had a "mind so fine, no idea [we add: no ideal] could violate it." The poets at least ask, with Marianne Moore, for "real toads in imaginary gardens." The theme which runs through the glorious celebration of the imagination in Wallace Stevens is the same:

We keep coming back and coming back
To the real: to the hotel instead of the hymns
That fall upon it out of the wind . . .

We seek
Nothing beyond reality. Within it
Everything, the spirit's alchemicana . . .¹

Not grim
Reality, but reality grimly seen.²

These things are said everywhere in Stevens. The "festival sphere" of the imagination, he says, begins from the "crude collops."

The poet Richard Wilbur recurs to a similar theme. Take, for example, his poem, "A World Without Objects is a Sensible Emptiness." The poem

¹ From "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven," in *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens*. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

² *Ibid.*

describes the alluring but accursed mirages of the goal of the mystic and the idealist. The poet is advised to turn back from the "long empty oven" of the desert to the real world and its homely objects: here is

. . . The spirit's right
Oasis, light incarnate.³

A sound theological critique of the insipid idealism which prevails so widely still in Christian circles receives a notable reinforcement in the extraordinary book, *Mimesis*, by Erich Auerbach. This study of the contribution of Hebraic and early Christian realism to world literature in effect draws out the corollaries of the Incarnation for the aesthetic order. It constitutes a radical challenge to classical and humanistic axioms with regard to Beauty and art, not in the form of an apologetic diatribe but rather of a masterly study in comparative literature. It becomes evident that the Hebraic-Christian concern with all humble and lowly and earthy reality in man and the world opens the way to the most significant life of the imagination. Here a Christian approach to art and symbol will rejoin much of the most influential artistic criticism of the last decade or two.

One may illustrate the new maturity in religious attitudes to the arts by noticing what has gone on in the theological seminaries in recent years. In times past, theological training was concerned, as indeed it always should be, with the professional and ecclesiastical aspects of the arts. The future minister was given, so far as possible, some introduction to his later responsibilities as one concerned with church music and hymnody, though even here he was often later at the mercy of his director of music. Some real effort was made in many seminaries to further his acquaintance with literature. There was here a dim carry-over of the ancient claims of rhetoric on the preacher. And indeed, the preacher should be, in the ancient sense, a grammarian, at home in letters, languages, eloquence and the classics. Both for his own spiritual culture and for the enrichment of preaching, courses were and are offered in English poetry as in the world's classics of devotion.

Theology, Symbols and Communication

The new interest in the arts in the seminaries and among theologians contrasts sharply to the approaches mentioned. It is no longer only a question of the Sacred Lyre and the cultural and professional formation of the clergy. More urgent today is the whole question of imaginative vehicles, of symbol-

³ From *Ceremony and Other Poems*, Copyright 1948, 1949, 1950 by Richard Wilbur. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt Brace, Inc.

ization, in religion. The semantic question in religious discourse is raised, and the whole problem of communication. Almost every department of theological study is involved at this level, and this means not only attention to the symbols and images of the Christian faith; it also means attention to the symbols and images and art forms of the contemporary world, as they are encountered in literature and the fine arts, but also in popular expressions, community rituals, social ideologies, and not least in the mass media of the time.

We realize better today that society lives by its myths, its favorite symbols; these are not idle or interchangeable. The Cross is not interchangeable with the Crescent or Lotus. The Cross is one thing, and the Swastika is another. The Sheaf of Wheat is one thing, and the Fascis is another. The "Battle Hymn of the Republic" is one thing, and the "Internationale" is another. The Lincoln Memorial is one thing, and the Tomb of Lenin is another.

Society lives by its symbols, and society represents a battleground of competing symbols. Sometimes they battle to the death. They signify sometimes a devitalizing stalemate within a family or nation of incompatible loyalties and banners: in France, the French Revolution and Catholic order; in our Southern states, ancient nostalgias and a genuine agrarian humanism: each with their evocative emblems.

Discernment of Meaning

Social responsibility and discernment require a clear perception of such rival myths and their power, recognition of such competing visions and rituals, ability to exorcize those that are malign, and to reconcile those that are benign. Society lives by its images, but its life is often stagnant and moribund where the living images fail. In either case, the church must recognize the situation. It is more important to discern the real, activating myths of civilization than the formal clichés of political orators. A democratic society may proclaim its democratic dogmas, but the same society may be governed by undemocratic nostalgias and passions fed by obsolete dreams. The church itself may proclaim its Christian principles, but Christians may be ruled by sub-Christian imaginations.

Archibald MacLeish well states the importance of the myths of an age, what happens when they fail, and the responsibility of the poet, and, we may add, the believer, in renewing them.

A world ends when its metaphor has died.
An age becomes an age, all else beside,
When sensuous poets in their pride invent
Emblems for the soul's consent

That speak the meanings men will never know
But man-imagined images can show:
It perishes when those images, though seen,
No longer mean . . .⁴

The main point is that when we say Art, we say Image; and when we say Image or Symbol, we say Meaning, we say Communication. The arts, old and new, the fine arts, the practical arts and the popular arts, are peculiarly carriers of meaning and value in our society as in all societies. The church is learning that it cannot ignore such expressions of the society in which it lives. The encounter of the gospel with the world, whether in evangelism, religious education, apologetics, or theology, requires a deep appreciation of, and initiation into, the varied symbolic expressions of culture. It is in such manifestations at all levels that the moral and spiritual life of the age discloses itself.

The appreciation of the modern arts in certain church circles today is therefore one of the most important features of the whole situation. It is one aspect of the awakening of the churches generally to a better knowledge of the world about them. It is indispensable to the purification of the sacred arts. More important still, it will contribute to a new theological seriousness, a greater discrimination in the matter of Christian symbols. In some periods, Christians need to be awakened from their dogmatic slumbers; and this is still widely the case, for dogmatism destroys sensibility as the letter kills. But today, it is widely true that the churches need to be awakened from their undogmatic slumber, in the sense that they have lost the sense of the fateful issues of good and evil, of salvation and damnation. This kind of salutary shock is provided by the modern arts, and not only by Christian but by agnostic artists and writers.

⁴. From "Hypocrit Auteur" in *Collected Poems: 1917-1952*.
Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

In our Next Issue

we will publish an anonymous answer to the statement of Josef Hromadka (in Our issue of January 21) written by a Hungarian who took part in the revolution last fall.

"Prof. Hromadka wonders why the Western world is still suspicious of the East. We have to ask him: is there any reason to relinquish this suspicion, especially now that the Soviet imperialism has shown quite clearly its true, cruel face—not only in Hungary but in other satellite states too?"

CORRESPONDENCE

Wilson and Dulles

TO THE EDITORS: Harold P. Ford's excellent profile of Wilsonian diplomacy (Dec. 24, 1956) leads me to suggest that perhaps our present Secretary of State is at heart a Wilsonian idealist. At any rate, Mr. Dulles' tendency to legalism, slogan-mongering and self-righteousness and his invocation of high-sounding principles bear a striking resemblance to the four weaknesses of Wilsonian idealism outlined by Mr. Ford. (This relationship is also suggested in an article by Hans J. Morgenthau: "The Decline and Fall of American Foreign Policy," *New Republic*, Dec. 10, 1956.)

Mr. Dulles, of course, is not a consistent Wilsonian as Wilson himself was not. Like Wilson and other liberal utopians who have gained political power, Dulles sometimes uses Wilsonian language, but his political decisions appear to be guided by an unstable combination of abstract "moral principles," which are largely irrelevant, and the inexorable pressures of domestic and international politics. Diplomacy by improvisation as practiced by Dulles has often meant inconsistency and vacillation which has confused our allies, our enemies and ourselves. Eric Sevareid recently observed that Dulles' policies have ranged all the way from "massive retaliation" to almost pure pacifism.

There is nothing wrong as such with improvisation in politics. In the hands of a Churchill, who is instructed by a sound view of human nature and history, improvisation can be an instrument of responsible statesmanship. In the hands of a Dulles whose political theory is at best confused, improvisation can be dangerous and sometimes fatal.

All this suggests the need for what Louis J. Halle has called "an applicable body of theory" to guide our foreign policy makers. Noting the same need, Walter Lippmann has said, "we may be able to fashion out of the old wisdom of mankind and a fresh appreciation of the new realities a philosophy which can guide our policy." Already a substantial contribution to such a philosophy has come from the pens of Reinhold Niebuhr, George F. Kennan, Hans J. Morgenthau, E. H. Carr, Lippmann and others, but thus far their efforts to topple the old utopian edifice appear to have been more effective than their efforts to build a new and more relevant one in its place.

Ernest W. Lefever
Hyattsville, Maryland

Foreign Policy Discussion

The writer of the following letter was for two years Director of the Federation of Uganda African Farmers, a cooperative with 50,000 members in Uganda. Last summer he visited Algeria, Morocco and North Africa to study the situation there.

TO THE EDITORS: Dr. Thompson's thought-provoking article in your January 7 issue is representative of the school of thought which views our reaction to the Suez crisis as a desertion of our allies for "legalistic-moralistic" illusions. I fear the reverse would be closer to the truth—that is, our allies deserted us and the commonly-respected laws of

international conduct in a moment of demoniac folly.

We should leave to the historians the task of dissecting the complex motivations that provoked the recent outbreak of violence in the Middle East. But it is important at this point to recognize that the United States has before it the task of leading the Western world in a total program of world strategy that is related to the world of our day and is not predicated on 19th century emotionalism over the glories of faded empires. This is a continuing problem. The volcanic subterranean forces that are remolding our world broke the surface temporarily in the Suez. There are other points where they are erupting, but we do not perceive it as clearly. For example, the futile French attempt to hold on to the predominantly Muslim state of Algeria as an integral part of France. That pre-eminent projection of European colonialism, South African *apartheid*, is another.

What we should be grateful for in respect to the Suez crisis is that a muddled and confused Eisenhower administration was somehow able to grasp the underlying realities of change that have taken place in our world and, by a stab in the dark, strike upon the policy that at least averted the disaster of the complete alienation of the Asian-African world from the West. Unhappily, recent actions indicate that our Government does not really rationally comprehend what it understood momentarily, and has relapsed into trying to appease its critics with fierce pronouncements.

The "balance of power" now rests in the hands of the Asian-African bloc. If we accept this fact and handle the situation skillfully, it may be possible to have many years of comparative peace in which to build a more secure peace system than the "balance of power." Those who would try to hold large sections of the Asian-African world by military power and pacts will only succeed in driving this non-white majority into the Soviet sphere. A corollary of this proposition, of course, is that the Soviet Union also must recognize the folly of trying to take the balance of power by conquest, thus tipping the scales too far and precipitating World War III.

We have emerged from the cold war period in which military power was the decisive factor in the continued peace of our world, and we have entered upon a new period in which ideology in its deepest sense, as distinguished from propaganda, has become decisive. I think that most of the leadership of the Asian-African world (despite their unwillingness to line up on our side in the power struggle), as products of our Western education system, find themselves more drawn to our forms of democracy. The great danger is that some such action as the Anglo-French attack on Egypt will convince the next generation of nationalists that there is more truth in Lenin's doctrine of "imperialism" than in the "Atlantic Charter."

We have arrived at one of those rare times in history when the *Realpolitik* is complimentary to the moral imperative. Christians now have a unique opportunity to propose and to carry into action programs which cannot be cynically dismissed as vague idealism. Christians through our world-wide mission

have developed a natural respect and sympathy for the aspirations of the peoples in the underdeveloped parts of the world. Helping them to break the final colonial links and to create new democratic governments and growing economies is the kind of effort which will go the farthest in preserving the peace of the world. Many Westerners are too impatient with the failure of these peoples to adopt immediately our democratic institutions and our highly efficient standards of economy and integrity. When a Nasser challenges the international community they go into a paroxysm of anger or despair without remembering the innumerable times in which nationalism has dictated their own courses of action.

Finally, I think that those who, like Dr. Thompson, conclude that "the dictates of national interest must guide us from case to case" are as far from the truth as those who, like Gary Davis, would have had us all renounce our own citizenship and embrace the world. National interest today is subject to the higher interest of world preservation and developing international law and morality. The central moral problem of our time is how to preserve essential individuality in the face of the ever-extending necessities of society. Our world strategy needs to be guided by a consideration for the emerging world society, in which we are only a minority, as much as a concern for preserving American and Western interests.

George W. Shepherd Jr.
New York, N. Y.

TO THE EDITORS: Mr. Thompson's thoughtful article seems somewhat to misread our basic foreign policy approach and to focus upon this question of approach, to the detriment of a fuller discussion of policy execution.

Washington, its public oratory to the contrary,

We are pleased to announce the addition of three new contributing editors. They are: John Baillie, Herbert Butterfield, and William Lee Miller. Dr. Baillie, a noted theologian, is Principal of New College, Edinburgh, and is a president of the World Council of Churches. Professor Butterfield, a noted historian and author of many books, including *Christianity and History* and *Christianity, Diplomacy and War*, is Master of Peterhouse at Cambridge University in England. Mr. Miller is on leave from *The Reporter* to do research in the relation of Christianity and politics. We know our readers will look forward to their contributions.

Detroit Public Library
Book Receiving Dept.
5201 Woodward Ave.
Detroit 2, Mich.

27462 11-57

almost certainly does not base its Middle East policy on the ethical absolutes of "peace, anti-colonialism and the United Nations," but on those very power considerations which Mr. Thompson urges. Washington does not smile at Nasser because it believes in the morality of anti-colonialism; rather, the smile is a calculated gambit derived from complete agreement with Mr. Thompson (and many of us) that our national interest cannot accept the further spread of Soviet influence in the Middle East.

Moreover, the root cause of our dilemma lies not so much in our moralistic or our power approach, as it does in, to use Mr. Thompson's words, our "dread disease" of faltering "in the realm of means." Our trouble is not our philosophy, but the tremendous complexity facing optimum ways and means once a "national interest" has been determined. We are not, therefore, so much the victims of misguided moralism as we are of our policy execution's imprecision and vacillation and our continuing mythology to the effect that the best national interest objectives may somehow be had without more taxes, more conventional armed forces, or a more disciplined national awareness of our danger. Our present rather decrepit Middle East policy cannot be bettered by our simply adopting a moralistic or a national interest approach, an Allied or an Arab approach. Rather it is a question, first of all, of determining what our national interest dictates within a Middle East context in which power considerations and national aspirations are distressingly intertwined; and then, secondly, of deciding upon and carrying out our foreign policy means, day-by-day, with immeasurably more consistence and imagination than we have shown to date.

Harold P. Ford
Davidson College
Davidson, N. C.

CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

A Christian Journal of Opinion
537 WEST 121 ST. • NEW YORK 27 • N. Y.

EDITORIAL BOARD

REINHOLD NIEBUHR AND JOHN C. BENNETT, *Chairmen*
WAYNE H. COWAN, *Managing Editor*
ARNOLD W. HEARN, *Assistant Editor*
M. SEARLE BATES WALDO BEACH AMOS WILDER
ROBERT MCAFEE BROWN F. ERNEST JOHNSON
JOSEPH SITTLER HENRY P. VAN DUSEN

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

FRANCIS P. MILLER J. OSCAR LEE
JOHN BAILLIE WILLIAM F. MAY ROGER L. SHINN
KENNETH W. THOMPSON WILLIAM LEE MILLER
HENRY SMITH LEIPER JOHN A. MACKAY
HERBERT BUTTERFIELD

CONTENTS

THE CHURCH'S NEW CONCERN WITH THE ARTS
AMOS N. WILDER